

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 SSM-05 H-02 PM-05 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 SAA-01 IO-14
SSO-00 INRE-00 MMO-01 SIG-03 MCE-00 ISO-00 /096 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. KORN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USICA
POUCH ALGIERS

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 13

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR JULY 13, 1978.
FYI ONLY SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS THOMAS RESTON.

Q. THE MATTER WAS RAISED A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO ON THE
ISRAELI ILLEGAL SHIPMENT OF U.S.-ORIGIN ARMS THROUGH THE
PORT OF JUNAYAH TO THE PHALANGE. I'M WONDERING IF A
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STUDY IS UNDER WAY OR ANYTHING HAS COME OF THE INVESTITI-
GATION THAT PERHAPS YOU'VE SET IN MOTION ON THOSE
CHARGES?

A. LET ME SAY GENERALLY SOMETHING HERE ABOUT THE
SITUATION IN LEBANON. THE CEASEFIRE IN LEBANON IS
STILL HOLDING. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FIRING INCIDENTS
FROM TIME TO TIME, WE ARE ENCOURAGED THAT THERE APPEAR
TO BE VERY SERIOUS EFFORTS UNDER WAY TO NEGOTIATE NEW
ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD REDUCE TENSIONS. AS IS ALREADY
WELL KNOWN, WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MANY QUARTERS IN
REGARD TO THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND IN LEBANON
GENERALLY.

AS THE SECRETARY SAID ON MODAY, WE MUST CONCENTRATE ON
SEEING TO IT THAT THE CEASEFIRE HOLDS AND THEN MOVE ON
TO SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT STABILITY
INTO THE SITUATION.

AS THE SECRETARY SAID, ONE WAY TO BRING ABOUT STABILITY
WOULD BE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ARMS THAT ARE PRESENT
AND ALSO TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN

CARRYING OUT ITS MANDATE. CONSISTENT WITH THIS POSSIBILITY, WE WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY LARGE-SCALE INTRODUCTION OF NEW ARMS INTO LEBANON SINCE THIS WOULD WORK AGAINST EFFORTS NOW UNDER WAY TO DEFUSE WHAT IS A SERIOUS SITUATION.

WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE SUPPLYING ARMS BY SEA TO THE MARONITE FORCES. WE TALKED WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ABOUT THIS MATTER, BUT I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER ON THOSE DISCUSSIONS.

Q. HAVE YOU SET IN MOTION AN INVESTIGATION INDEPENDENT OF YOUR QUESTIONING THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT?

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A. WE HAVE TALKED TO THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ABOUT THOSE REPORTS THAT WE HAVE SEEN.

Q. BUT I'M ASKING YOU IF YOU ARE INVESTIGATING THE WAY YOU STUDIED THE LAST TIME THESE CHARGES CAME UP. AND IF I'M CORRECT YOU ACTUALLY DID WARN ISRAEL THE LAST TIME SUCH THINGS SEEMED TO BE OCCURRING.

A. LET ME SEPARATE OUT HERE TWO THINGS. ONE IS OUR CONCERN THAT THE VARIOUS PARTIES DO NOT INCREASE THE FLOW OF WEAPONS INTO LEBANON. ANOTHER CONCERN WHICH WE HAVE IS THE PRECISE KIND OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH IS OF U.S. ORIGIN AND WHICH EQUIPMENT FALLS UNDER U.S. REGULATIONS GOVERNING TRANSFERS TO THIRD PARTIES.

SOME WEEKS AGO, AN ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE GAVE US RENEWED ASSURANCES THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT TRANSFER TO ANY GROUP IN LEBANON U.S.-ORIGIN MILITARY EQUIPMENT SUBJECT TO OUR LAW AND AGREEMENTS WHICH ISRAEL WHICH PROHIBIT THE TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT TO THIRD PARTIES WITHOUT OUR SPECIFIC APPROVAL. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY EVIDENCE THAT WOULD CAUSE US TO DOUBT THOSE ASSURANCES.

Q. IN THE MEETING YOU HAD WITH THE ISRAELIS, DID YOU DO ANYTHING MORE THAN ASK THEM IF THEY WERE TRANSFERRING NON-U.S. WEAPONS OR ANY WEAPONS? DID YOU DO ANYTHING MORE

THAN ASK THEM FOR INFORMATION?

A. I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE YOU THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR DISCUSSIONS. WE HAVE BEEN URGING ON ALL PARTIES IN THE LEBANON SITUATION TO USE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT. AND, OBVIOUSLY, IF YOU'RE TRYING TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF
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ARMS IN THE AREA, MOVES TO INCREASE THE FLOW OF ARMS INTO LEBANON WOULD NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

Q. BUT DID YOU THEN URGE THE ISRAELIS TO USE MAXIMUM CONSTRAINT DURING THAT MEETING?

A. I DONT KNOW WHAT WAS SAID DURING THE PARTICULAR MEETING THAT YOU ARE REFERRING TO, AND I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO GO INTO THE SUBSTNACE OF THAT PARTICULAR MEETING. BUT AS YOU KNOW, AND WE HAVE BEEN SAYING IT PRIVATELY TO ALL THE PARTIES IN LEBANON -- WE URGE UPON THEM MAXIMUM RESTRAINT ON WHAT IS A VERY, VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION.

Q. YOU SAID OVER HERE WHEN YOU TALKED WITH THEM YOU RECEIVED ASSURANCES NOT TO SUPPLY TO ANY PARTY IN LEBANON ANY U.S.-ORIGIN WEAPONS. SO WOULD IT BE ALL RIGHT FOR THE ISRAELIS TO SUPPLY THE LEBANESE NON-U.S. ORIGIN WEAPONS?

A. THE INCREASED SUPPLY OF NON-U.S.-ORIGIN WEAPONS WOULD NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR VIEW OF THE SITUATION, WHICH IS THAT ALL PARTIES SHOULD EXERCISE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT. BUT WE HAVE NO LEGAL CONTROL OVER WHERE NON-U.S. ORIGIN ARMS ARE SHIPPED TO. WE HAVE CERTAIN AGREEMENTS WITH ISRAEL. WE HAVE CERTAIN CONSTRAINTS OF U.S. LAW WHICH DO ENABLE US TO EXERCISE SOME CONTROL OVER WHAT HAPPENS TO CERTAIN TYPES OF U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT.

Q. HAVE YOU HEARD FROM ANY AMERICAN ALLIES THEIR CONCERN THAT U.S. WEAPONS ARE INVOLVED IN THIS?

I MIGHT POINT OUT THAT OUR FIRST INFORMATION ON THIS CAME FROM DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, COUNTRIES CLOSE TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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UNITED STATES. WE ASSURE THEY'VE MADE THE SAME INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO YOU. CAN YOU CONFIRM ANY SUCH CONTACTS?

A. NO, I'M NOT AWARE OF THAT.

Q. YOU SAID WE TALKED WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ABOUT

THIS MATTER. THEN YOU SAID SOME WEEKS AGO THEY GAVE US RENEWED ASSURANCE. I PRESUME THAT THE RENEWED ASSURANCES CAME BEFORE YOU TALKED ABOUT THIS MATTER.

A. THAT'S RIGHT. THEY DID.

Q. WHAT WAS THE INCIDENT WHICH CAUSED YOU TO SEEK THOSE RENEWED ASSURANCES SEVERAL WEEKS AGO?

A. I'M NOT SAYING THAT WE DID SEEK ASSURANCES.

Q. THE ISRAELI THEN VOLUNTEERED THOSE?

A. THAT IS HOW THIS READS HERE, YES.

Q. TOM, YOU'RE TELLING US THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE GIVEN UP ASSURANCES ON THE THIRD-COUNTRY TRANSFER POINT. CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT GAVE US ASSURANCES OR WHAT THE ISRAELI RESPONSE WAS WHEN WE RAISED THE OTHER POINT ABOUT NON-U.S.-ORIGIN ARMS GOING INTO LEBANON?

A. I CANNOT.

Q. HAS THE U.S. CONSIDERED TAKING ANY KIND OF ACTION AT ALL? IN VIEW OF YOUR STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SUPPLYING OF ANY ARMS FROM ISRAEL TO THE PHALANGE, ARE YOU WILLING TO STATE THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED TO THE POINT OF TAKING SOME ACTION TO STOP THAT?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO SPECULATE ON WHAT ACTION WE MAY OR MAY NOT TAKE IN THE FUTURE. WE'VE MADE OUR POSITION CLEAR TO THE ISRAELIS AND THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN LEBANON THAT WE BELIEVE THAT MAXIMUM RESTRAINT SHOULD BE USED.

Q. DID YOU SEE REPORTS ABOUT THE SYRIANS INTRODUCING LARGE SCALE ARMS SUPPLIES TO LEBANON?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO OFFER YOU ON THAT TODAY.

Q. IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE SYRIANS ARE BRINGING ARTILLERY, HEAVY ARTILLERY, INTO BEIRUT, NOT ONLY INTO LEBANON, BUT INTO BEIRUT. HAVE YOU SEEN REPORTS ABOUT THIS?

A. I HAVE NOT, MYSELF, BUT, HERE AGAIN, WE HAVE URGED ON ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE SYRIANS, THAT

THEY USE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT.

Q. I AM SPEAKING ABOUT THE INTRODUCTION OF LARGE SCALE ARMS SUPPLIES INTO LEBANON. I AM NOT SPEAKING ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THIS ARMAMENT.

A. THE ASSURANCES THAT I WAS SPEAKING ABOUT EARLIER WERE ASSURANCES ON THE QUESTION OF U.S. ORIGIN EQUIPMENT.

Q. DO YOU TALK TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ABOUT THIS MATTER?

A. WE HAVE TALKED TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AS WE UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE TALKED WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, AND WE HAVE URGED ON THEM MAXIMUM RESTRAINT IN TERMS OF TRYING TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION.

Q. CAN WE INFER FROM ALL THIS THAT YOU DO HAVE EVIDENCE THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE INTRODUCING ARMS INTO LEBANON VIA JUNIA?

A. WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS, YES.

Q. YOU ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO SAY THAT YOU HAVE INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS HAPPENING?

A. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO SAY THAT, NO.

CHRISTOPHER

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